



Councillor Richard Langridge, centre, with supporters of the Pooh Sticks Championships

Pooh sticks contest finds new summer home in the county

Rotary club will be hosts of the popular event

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ONE of Oxfordshire's quirkiest rituals, the World Pooh Sticks Championships, has found a new home in the county.

The annual competition is set to go ahead at a new location in West Oxfordshire this year and, for the first time ever, it will be in the summer.

The Rotary Club of Oxford Spires will hold this year's event at Langel Common in Witney on Sunday, June 7.

The common lies between the centre of Witney and Cogges Manor Farm.

Rotary club member Karen Eveleigh said: "We were delighted to receive such great publicity and support in our search for a new venue and are thrilled to

have found this location in Witney."

For 31 years the annual competition, inspired by AA Milne's *Winnie the Pooh*, attracted people to Day's Lock at Little Wittenham, near Didcot.

Competitors take it in turns to drop sticks off the bridge and "race" them to the other side.

But the event ran out of space for cars to park at Little Wittenham and the rotary club announced in January that it was looking for a new home.

It will hold the day in partnership with Cogges Manor Farm.

Cogges director Colin Shone said: "Playing Pooh sticks is one of the most special and essential memories of any childhood.

"We are delighted to be supporting the new home for the world championships."

Due to the high level of boat

traffic during the summer on the Thames at Little Wittenham, the Environment Agency only allowed the event to be held between October and March.

This resulted in the event having to be either postponed or cancelled due to bad weather twice in recent years.

The new location on the Windrush, which has no river traffic, will mean that the Rotary Club can hold the championships in the summer for the first time.

Members are preparing to hold it on June 7 subject to obtaining the council event permissions.

West Oxfordshire district councillor Richard Langridge said: "We are thrilled that Witney has been chosen as the new venue for the World Pooh Stick Championships and we can assure them that they will be given a very good welcome."